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ABSTRACT

Papers presented at the City University of New York's English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) Council conference on maximizing the chances for success of limited-English-proficient college students include the following: "Thresholds, Alienation, and Syntax" (Geoffrey Summerfield); "Storytelling: Starting with the Familiar" (A. Duku Anokye); "Teachers Talk about Reading and Writing Connections" (Jean Withrow, Gay Brookes, Martha Clark Cummings); "Student Autonomy and Group Reliance in an ESL Reading/Writing Course" (Jack Gantzer, Nancy Erber Cadet); "Learning Vocabulary through an Academic Subject: A Case Study" (Kate Parry); "What Happens beyond the Developmental Writing/ESL Course?" (Trudy Smoke); "Person to Person: The Stay in School Partnership Program" (Miriam Eisenstein, John Devine, Timothy Ebsworth, Judith Horvath, John Mancuso, Lauren Sunstein); "Language Facilitation: A Way of Improving the Odds" (Carlos Yorio, Pilar Enright, Elaine Klein); "Improving Learning by Teaching from Students' Strengths" (Adele MacGowan); "The Model and Its Variations: The Pre-Freshman Summer Program of CUNY's Office of Special Programs (SEEK & College Discovery)" (Frank Kehl). A report of a panel discussion on "Improving the Odds" concludes the document. (MSE)

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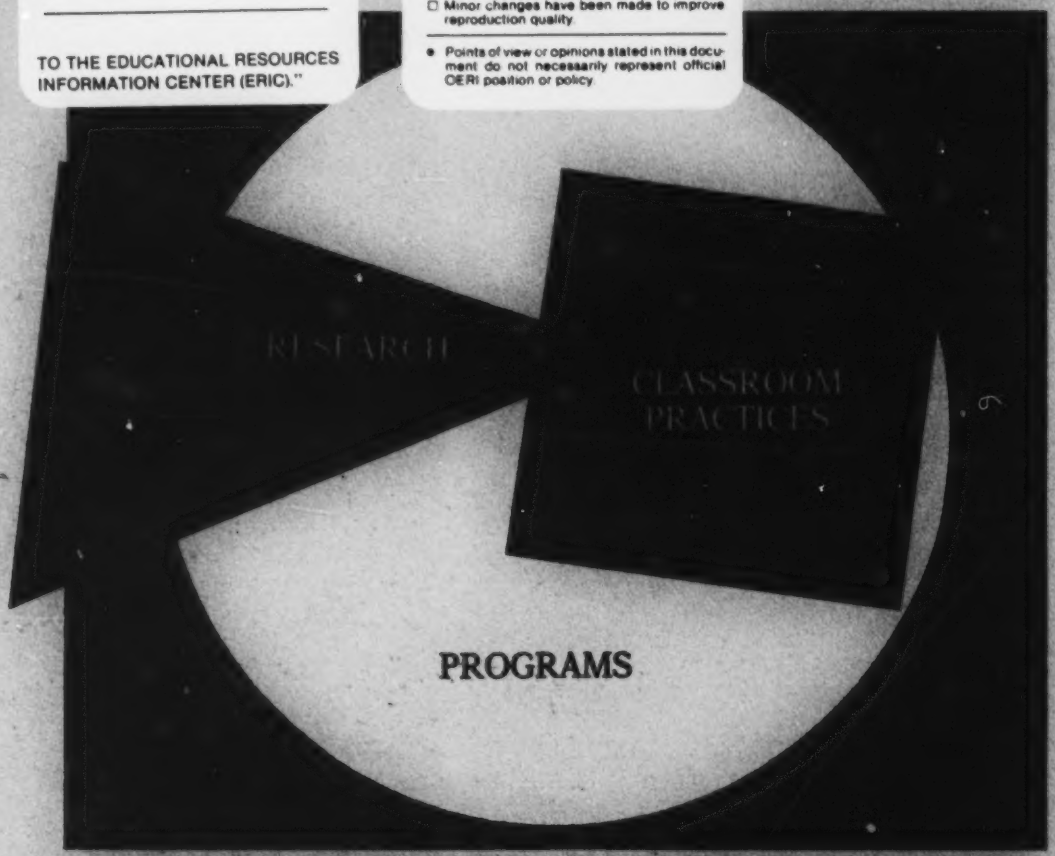

IMPROVING THE ODDS: HELPING ESL STUDENTS SUCCEED

Selected Papers from the 1987 CUNY ESL Council Conference

Instructional Resource Center
Office of Academic Affairs
The City University of New York, 535 East 80th Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10021

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INTRODUCTION

One generally refers to "Odds" when discussing gambling. A gambler wants to know what the odds are in his favor before he decides to make a bet. It may therefore seem peculiar that we decided to name an academic conference about going to college "Improving the Odds." Unfortunately, however, going to college these days is very much a gamble, especially for students who begin their college studies with a significant handicap such as a lack of English mastery. Given the high dropout rate, students cannot be at all sure that their academic efforts will lead to graduation. It has, however, always been an important part of the mission of The City University of New York (CUNY) to accept students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to go to college. In planning the conference and in selecting articles for inclusion in this issue, we asked ourselves what is being done today and what more could be done to maximize the chances for success for students at CUNY and at other colleges. We believe that the presenters at the 1987 CUNY ESL Council Conference offered valuable information on this topic and we are pleased to share their insights with you in this publication.

In the opening plenary address, Geoffrey Summerfield discusses "threshold experience," noting how certain students may be alienated by such experiences as going to college. The selected papers are divided into sections on Classroom Practices, Research Studies, and Special Programs. The final article summarizes a plenary panel session in which a number of distinguished educators discuss ways of altering the college environment in order to lessen the degree of alienation among students who are not fully prepared for the college experience.

We are grateful to Gay Brookes who, as President of the CUNY ESL Council, originally suggested the conference theme and organized the conference at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC). We also wish to thank the Conference Committee and the BMCC hosts for making the conference a success, and Virginia Slaughter, Coordinator of the CUNY Instructional Resource Center, for working with us through a long editing and revision process. Finally, we thank Harvey S. Wiener, University Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, for agreeing to publish these summaries and adaptations and for his continued support of our efforts to improve ESL teaching at CUNY.

Sue Dicker and Len Fox, Co-Chairs
1987 CUNY ESL Council Conference

THRESHOLDS, ALIENATION AND SYNTAX

GEOFFREY SUMMERFIELD

Editor's Note: This keynote address was given in February, 1987 to the annual CUNY ESL Council Conference, setting the stage for the proceedings by showing how immigrants confront a new culture and a new language.

When someone delivers a speech, he is no longer a private person: he is functioning in a public domain, and he has a clearly defined role: to talk, and to go on talking, until the clock says it is time to stop. At what point has he shifted from private to public? What changes of gear take place in the transition from one to the other? Where and when, exactly, is the threshold, the place and time of transition?

The answer--or part of it--is that in preparation for delivering a speech, he moves in and out of this role of speaker, rehearsing sentences, themes, questions, and various voices; switching back and forth, to and fro, between private expressive speech and experimental public speech in a lengthy process of sporadic rehearsal. In a word, he stands at a threshold, looking both back and forward, both out and in, occupying a place of teasing ambiguity, and maintaining an inner dialogue between what he is tempted to say and what he feels he ought to say, a dialogue between irresponsibility and responsibility.

My first learned language was Latin, and the Latin for "threshold" is "limen," the genitive form of which yields the adjective "liminal." The state we are in as we stand uncertainly at a threshold, looking both back and forwards, is now known as one of liminality, or rite of passage. In any rite of passage there are three distinguishable phases: first, a separation from life as it has ordinarily been known; second, a margin, a threshold, a liminal place, a kind of limbo; and third, a new place, a place of re-aggregation, where we return to "ordinary" life, but with a new status or an altered state of consciousness. To use a grammatical metaphor, the first place and the third place are in the indicative; the middle place, the liminal place, is in the subjunctive.

The sophisticated mind, the knowing mind endowed with the privileges of metacognition, can take pleasure in the ambiguities and disequilibriums of liminality and can enjoy the ambivalent privilege of being both participant and spectator. The immature, unformed, or naive mind, conversely, can experience only the stress, the imbalance, the uncertainty of liminality; it participates but cannot reach out to claim the relative detachment of spectatorship and says, in effect, "I don't know what the hell is happening to me, I don't know why I'm so confused, so unhappy." Such a mind is in a desperate hurry

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GEOFFREY SUMMERFIELD is Associate Professor of English at New York University.

to "get the hell out of there" and claim the stability and security of re-aggregation, or conversely, yields to the retrogressive impulse to slip back into the pre-liminal phase.

In the 1960's, I worked for the Cambridge University Examinations Syndicate as an examiner for the Cambridge Proficiency Certificate. The certificate was one of the keys to desirable employment and it required functional competence in English as a second language. What I discovered over the course of a few years came from a simple observation: the young women in question survived in England for a year or two as au pair girls, and one or two days a week they went to college for formal English instruction. The young women from Spain and Southern Italy were on the whole very unhappy. Not only were they treated as servants by the families they lived with, but they also tended to perceive their experience, in all its complex dimensions, as unrelievedly painful. A half hour conversation was part of the examination, and I always invited them to talk about their current experience. The central impression they conveyed was that they felt an almost irresistible desire to revert to their pre-liminal lives.

Sharply contrasted with the young women from Southern (Latin) Europe, were those from Germany and Scandinavia, who interacted with their host families much more as equals, and who considered it a "natural" right to participate in middle-class English social and family life. It was as if you could draw a horizontal line across the map of Europe, and say that those to the South found liminality to be almost unendurably uncomfortable, even distressing, while those to the North tended to take it in their stride. One way of construing such a sharp division could be in terms of what human beings variously expect, both of themselves and for themselves. I prefer to read it in a different way and to see the difference between those from the South, who were struggling to maintain a more or less acceptable level of participation, and those from the North, who had learned to fill the roles of both participant and spectator.

In other words, the "Northern blondes" brought to the experience of liminality the powers of metacognition: the ability to reflect with relative detachment on the pros and cons, the whys and wherefores of their daily lives as speakers of English as a second language, the mental resources that enabled them to see their situation and its exigencies from the outside, to see it ironically, to see it as a manageable experience, to see it with the privilege of humor and even of wit. Conversely, when I asked a young woman from the South to tell me the ways in which she perceived the differences between living one's life in the mother tongue and trying to shape and regulate it in a second language, she tended to speak of loss, of deprivation. The tone of voice became resonant with nostalgia and the pain of alienation.

Alienation, disjunction, and cleavage are more or less neutered academic terms that in themselves suggest nothing of the confusion and disarray of saying goodbye irrevocably to one's mother and her language. Our first language claims us, as Ong (1982) observes, "claims us as a mother does, immediately, from the beginning, lovingly, possessively, participatorily, and incontrovertibly." But none of us can always continue to be our mother's children; we have to grow up,

and grow away. Ong concedes that cleavage is "not all bad," for "to understand other things and themselves, to grow, human beings need not only proximity but also distance, even from themselves. Out of alienation, and only out of alienation, certain greater unities can come."

Indeed, Ong goes so far as to insist that "persons at ease with their origins and with their own unconscious, welcome certain alienations, for they can put them to good use." And that, I suspect, is more or less what those Northern blondes, exiled in Warwickshire in the 1960's, were in effect telling me. They would have been the first to admit that they felt deprived; that, in the second language, they were not very good at saying the same thing in different ways; that in it they had not yet developed the ability to hesitate, to say nothing very much, to keep the channel of communication open while thinking what to say next, to waffle, to keep the words going while saying practically nothing; that they were not yet adept in the second language at predicting what the other person was going to say; and that they were less than accomplished at adding new verbal skills, learning new words and meanings while talking and listening. "In our mother tongue, we process these new elements all the time, without thinking. In a second language, it is often very difficult to continue interacting (talking and listening) while at the same time learning new things" (Halliday, 1975, p. 200).

Conversely, because the Northern blondes had acquired the habit of mature reflection and had learned the usefulness of metacognition, and had learned how to be both participants and spectators, their stance vis-a-vis the second language was confident, enterprising, risk-taking, experimental, and pragmatic. Being a spectator gave them the space, the elbow room, in which to learn, to reflect on the recent past, and to prepare for the immediate future. Their pace was steady; their view of themselves was optimistic but sensible; they expected no miracles, no magical transmogrifications; but they knew how to pay attention, not only to others but also to themselves. One part of themselves that they construed very well was the way in which they formed sentences in the second language.

In what kinds of situations, I asked them, do you produce your most "ambitious" English sentences? In what kinds of situations do you fall back on very simple utterances? Their answers were consistent: as participants, under the pressure of the demands of interaction, face to face, moment by moment, they survive most effectively by *not* reaching for complex sentences. But when alone, thinking back over what happened and why and how--then they can rehearse and refine the complex forms of the English sentence.

An appropriate pedagogy, it seems to me, must give the student occasions to be a participating user, involved in verbal interactions, and occasions to be a spectator, to rest from flying, to perch. My own experience has led me to ask students to write not only a variety of texts in a variety of roles, such as seem to produce repertoire-expansion, but to invite them also to write meta-texts. There's nothing very mysterious about these meta-texts. They are an intergral part of my students' work because I happen to agree with Donaldson (1979) in her observation that "We do best those things that we do for our own purposes." The meta-text, then, is a commentary on a text just completed and on the experience of writing that text; it is a text addressed directly to me by the

student, who can point to difficulties, uncertainties, questions, speculations. For some students, the meta-text becomes more important than the text, and it also points to the truth of Halliday's (1978) view that it is when we are spectators that we extend and expand our verbal resources. It is in the meta-texts, or commentaries, that students write about their own writing and about their own experience of writing that come to form one side of a dialogue, a dialogue between student and instructor that builds up an increasingly adequate level of metacognition, of language about language.

Elsasser and John-Steiner (1977) write of their work with Spanish-speaking Americans at the University of New Mexico some years ago and provide interesting insights, as does Vygotsky (1986), especially in terms of his distinctions between the syntaxes of inner speech, social speech, and writing. Through these works and through our own research and teaching, we can better help our students pass through the threshold, from a place of alienation and loneliness to a place of re-aggregation, of acceptance, and comfort in their new reality.

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CLASSROOM PRACTICES

One of the best ways to help students succeed is to make the classroom a place where learning becomes a joy rather than an ordeal. The three articles in this section focus on the student and on methods calculated to engage the student actively in learning. *A. Duku Anokye* describes how to use storytelling effectively to develop understanding of other cultures and to generate high quality student writing. *Jean Withrow* et al. summarize the suggestions of five reading and writing teachers on methods of integrating these two activities. These suggestions include keeping journal entries on a reading and to develop the entries into an essay later on, generating and responding to questions about a novel, and developing a thematic reading and writing course on adolescence. *Jack Gantzer* and *Nancy Erber Cadet* describe how they pair a reading and a writing course, using common themes and classroom methods such as freewriting, personal writing, student-generated questions on reading, and summarizing student stories.

STORYTELLING: STARTING WITH THE FAMILIAR

A. DUKU ANOKYE

My family has kept the oral tradition alive for generations. My paternal grandfather, something of a Renaissance man known in our Michigan community as a philosopher and orator, was frequently called upon to recite Black history in church. My maternal grandfather told stories nightly. One of my great-great-grandfathers was hanged for telling his story: he preached against slavery in the slave quarters. My mother, a community activist, negotiator, and speaker for Black and women's rights, continued the tradition. It is thus not surprising that when I became interested in telling stories and reciting in public, it was accepted as the natural thing to do. I did not give my art any formal thought until I became an ESL teacher.

Second language learners come to the classroom with many fears, inhibitions, and anxieties. Why not greet them with something familiar? Storytelling is one form of communication that is a part of all the world's cultures. Stories are entertaining, and they may serve academic purposes as well. They can foster intercultural understanding, reinforce oral skills development, and enhance written expression.

Folklore is a primary source of cultural knowledge. Livo and Reitz (1986) define storytelling as "a prehistoric and historic thread of awareness, a way in which we can know, remember, and understand." For the heterogeneous, nonnative class, stories from the students' homelands can be the key to promoting intercultural appreciation and understanding while cultivating the individual student's feelings of self-worth. A setting where students are encouraged to share stories they know, love, and have heard repeatedly increases their willingness to use fledgling oral skills. Not only does telling the story bear fruit in refining oral skills, but discussion of the story also gives students an opportunity to crystallize their analytical skills while defining the moral values and conditions of the society from which the story sprang. Students develop an esteem for the customs, culture, and beliefs of the target culture of America and those of other cultures as well. This anthroliterary approach to cross-cultural understanding, developed by Mead and Metraux (1953), promotes understanding not only of others but of oneself as well.

It is important for students to know that common themes run from culture to culture, that the heroes of their country may have counterparts in other countries, that famine, greed, honesty, love, and brotherhood do not exist in their world only. Understanding the fortunes and misfortunes, the dreams and nightmares of other societies leads to a sensitive awareness of the individual members of

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A. DUKU ANOKYE is Instructor in the Department of English at Queensborough Community College.

those societies. Folktales can illustrate family relations, methods of food-gathering, means of communication, and additional facts about daily life (Goodman & Melcher, 1984). The themes that emerge represent the values, morals, and strengths of the people. Giving the students the opportunity to share their world view through their folk history and culture permits them to interact on familiar grounds while expanding their ability to value other cultures' ways of life. Because stories pass on the beliefs of the people, listeners are reminded of the roles of others in life and of the skills and goals needed for the survival of the group (See Shiells, 1986).

Classroom practice can also reinforce the benefits of storytelling in fostering the development of oral skills in English. First, students choose a story that they feel shows some value and communicate it to the group by means of descriptions that will re-create the mood and intensity of the original story; they are encouraged to use vivid descriptions and make smooth transitions from one idea to the next. Ultimately, the story should elicit the appropriate emotional response. The student must be prepared to answer questions, which may be critical to understanding the story. The result is a lesson in which students produce conversational dialogue. The stories may also serve as catalysts for role-playing and discussion.

Storytelling also helps to develop writing skills. Students learn to compare oral and written narratives in terms of style and audience. Audience response to previous tellings provides guidelines for writing the story. The teacher's goal is to strengthen the student's ability to relate information in such a way that it will be clear to a variety of readers.

There is a story from the Akan tribe of Ghana, West Africa that I like to tell my students to get them started in story-telling. It is called "The Planting Party" (see Courtlander, 1957), a story about a farmer who was without a family and, as was the custom, called upon his neighbors to help him plant his crop. Unfortunately, those that he called upon were his natural enemies. The planting party was ruined because of fighting among the planters. At this point the class discusses what lesson the farmer learned. They talk about what the story reveals about the Akans and make comparisons between what they've learned about the society of the Akans and what they know about their own. The moral--importance of cooperation--elicits lively discussions and comparisons. In many societies, people's livelihoods depend on their overcoming their individual aspirations in favor of the group. In an agricultural society such as that of the Akans, this lesson is taught over and over.

At this point the students are prepared to share their own stories and discuss their lives in a non-threatening environment. We talk about the societies that produced the stories and what the stories can tell about them. These discussions become the basis for self-expression, oral development and, finally, intriguing essays.

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TEACHERS TALK ABOUT READING AND WRITING CONNECTIONS

JEAN WITHROW, with GAY BROOKES and MARTHA CLARK CUMMINGS

Editor's Note: We draw part of this article from a panel featuring the five teachers whose classroom practices are described below. Jean Withrow and Martha Clark Cummings moderated the panel. Gay Brookes collaborated with them in reviewing the literature and presenting the results of Withrow's study.

Teachers of writing in ESL programs, as in other language based programs, know that reading helps writing. ESL literature substantially supports this conviction (see Krashen, 1984). ESL literature also shows a number of ways in which reading and writing connect; for example, at the level of process. In both reading and writing, such cognitive processes as analyzing, associating, and generalizing take place toward a common end, the making of meaning. The literature, however, is less clear in relating theory to practice.

One of the predominant notions about reading is that readers are active. Smith (1971) and Rosenblatt (1978), among others, emphasize the readers' active role in creating meaning from a text. According to schema theory, it is through interaction between the words on a page and their background knowledge (schemata) that readers arrive at an interpretation of what they read.

A second notion is that a greater awareness of the reading process may help the writing process. Calkins (1986) and Troyka (1986), among others, recommend teaching writing students the process of reading. Calkins encourages having students practice strategies used by good readers, like question-asking, retelling, predicting, rereading, and guessing. Troyka recommends making students aware of how readers read and how writers read. Smith (1983) and Krashen (1984) say that people learn important aspects of writing by reading.

A third prevailing notion is that readers differ from each other in the ability to focus on the meaning of a text and integrate new information presented in the text into their existing knowledge; and this ability seems to carry over into their writing. In studying the reading comprehension strategies of second language learners, Block (1986) describes two kinds of readers: 1) integrators, who successfully focus on meaning and integrate new information, and 2) nonintegrators, who rely on

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JEAN WITHROW is Assistant Professor and Chairperson of the Department of Developmental Skills at Borough of Manhattan Community College. GAY BROOKES is Associate Professor in the Department of Developmental Skills at Borough of Manhattan Community College and Past President of the CUNY ESL Council. MARTHA CLARK CUMMINGS is Assistant Professor at LaGuardia Community College.

personal experience to make meaning of a text and who make few attemps to connect or relate information they read to their previous knowledge. This inability to integrate often occurs in their writing as well: they seem unable to use texts as support for what they write. Yet this is a skill needed in college.

Finally, writing moves developmentally from personal to more abstract levels, or, in other words, from personal to academic (Moffett, 1968; Britton, et al., 1975; and others). Academic writing demands more than personal narratives or personal responses to readings.

These notions suggest the following questions:

How can we as writing teachers make use of reading in the classroom to enhance our students' writing?

How can teachers encourage students to be active readers? Can writing about reading help accomplish this?

How much attention and time do (or should) writing teachers pay to the reading process?

How can students be helped to see relationships between the reading and writing processes?

How can we help students become "integrators" in both reading and writing?

What kinds of assignments can prepare students for the expository writing needed for college work?

The above questions prompted Jean Withrow to conduct a study in which she interviewed over 50 writing and reading teachers about how they connect reading and writing in their classes. The teachers taught both native speakers and ESL students in colleges and high schools in and around New York City. The basic interview questions included:

1. How do you organize your writing (or reading) class?

2. What purposes do you see for reading in a writing class? (or writing in a reading class?)

3. How do you use reading in your writing class? (or writing in your reading class?)

4. Do you deal with the process of reading with students? If so, how? Do you help students see connections between reading and writing processes? If so, how?

5. What readings have been successful with your students?

Five of the interviewed teachers were subsequently asked to describe their classroom practices on a panel at the CUNY ESL Conference, summarized below.

Ellen Block, a reading instructor at Baruch College, outlined three reasons for having students write in her reading classes: 1) to get students to externalize or objectify their process of reading; 2) to help students monitor or check their understanding and develop or strengthen appropriate comprehension strategies; and 3) to help students develop fluency as readers and writers. She described a sequence of writing assignments she has used with reading students. The assignments begin as personal writing or journal pieces and end up as finished essays. While reading Arthur Miller's play A View from the Bridge, students react, in writing, to quotations from the play. They write down what they understand the speakers to be saying, what inferences they have made about the speakers' motivations and attitudes, and what questions they have about meaning or motivation. Students read their jounal entries to one another in groups, then respond to each other's entries. More objective kinds of writing follow: retellings of the plot from a particular point of view, summaries of the plot, and comparisons. Finally, students write formal essays about the theme of the play. Each student creates a theme statement based on a quotation the student considers important to the play, and supports this statement with illustrations from the text. Thus students move from personal writing to more objective, more formal essay writing, using a process that can be applied to most of their college classes.

A second teacher, Marsha Slater, Writing Coordinator at the International High School at LaGuardia Community College, described two activities for relating reading and writing. First, students read Markandaya's novel, Nectar in a Sieve, and keep a reading log in which they write down their thoughts and questions about the text to which the teacher responds. After completing the novel, students brainstorm questions they still have about the book. Teachers put questions on the board, grouped into categories; together they form larger, umbrella questions. Then students choose one question to focus on and form small discussion groups around that question. Finally, each student writes his or her version of an answer to the question in a finished essay. The second activity Slater described, a reading interview project, gives students three different means of learning reading strategies from one another: oral interviews, videotapes of the interviews, and written reports. After brainstorming interview questions and practicing interviewing techniques, students choose a partner and interview that person about his or her reading habits, reading strategies, and reading history. The interviews are videotaped for other students to view, and the written-down versions of the interviews are published in a school magazine called International Reading Interviews.

Rebecca Mlynarczyk, an ESL and basic writing instructor at Hunter College, described a life history project that she said generates great interest in writing. The activity combines two of Mlynarczyk's favorite reading and writing activities: reading Russell Baker's autobiography Growing Up and writing life history papers. During the time in which they are reading the book, students also conduct interviews with someone, usually a family member or older person, using both tape recorder and pen. They bring transcripts of the interviews to class and discuss them in a short oral report. Students, working through several drafts, eventually produce an essay in which they describe the important themes of the interviewed person's life. Often these essays are published in a class magazine at the end of the semester.

Linda Anstendig, a basic writing and freshman composition instructor at Mercy College and at Pace University in White Plains, described a new basic writing curriculum modeled on Bartholomae and Petrosky's Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts (1986). Bartholomae and Petrosky's approach requires students to read non-fiction and fiction about a single topic and, as they read, to write about their own experiences on that topic, working toward developing their own hypotheses. Anstendig adopts many of these ideas but adapts them to suit her students, changing such things as quantity of reading and length of assignments. In her course, she bases reading and writing assignments on one theme for the entire semester--growth and change in adolescence. Students read essays, short stories, and parts of autobiographies and respond to the readings in double-entry notebooks as suggested by Berthoff (1981). On the left side of a page, students note quotations, observations, facts, characters, and main ideas; on the right side of the page, they respond, react, ask questions, give their own feelings, and make connections with what they have read. Students discuss these notebooks in small groups after each reading, and complete a specific task, such as developing one group question for the entire class to discuss. At the same time, they do weekly writings about their own lives, seeing tentative connections with the lives of people they are reading about, and, through their reading, writing, and discussions, formulate and reformulate generalizations about adolescence. Writing assignments are sequenced and recursive: For example, students look at a topic from a different angle each week, and assignments move from dealing with significant moments to dealing with patterns and theories about adolescence. Anstendig reported that students find the double entry notebook especially helpful in getting "more meaning from the reading," to quote one of her students.

Finally, Bill Bernhardt, Associate Professor of English at the College of Staten Island, described four different kinds of reading material that he uses in ESL and developmental writing classes: 1) texts in which writers, both student and professional, talk about their process of writing; 2) "inspirational" texts, or readings that will inspire students to write; 3) reading that is the occasion for dialog between the student and the passage he or she has read (students can, for example, write letters to the editor in response to an article); 4) finally, things which students can imitate, for example, a review, an obituary, or a news story. Bernhardt feels that students do not usually need "instruction" for writing these pieces. "All that is necessary is exposure to the reading, and the response comes easily without much teacherly advice."

As a way of defining areas needing further exploration, the five teachers cited several questions they still had about reading in a writing class and writing in a reading class:

1. How can we get students to write down what they are thinking as they're reading, to objectify the process? How can we get them to become self monitors of their reading?
2. How does writing actually assist reading? Writing helps bring up objective reading scores, but how does it do this?
3. In what ways can we say the roles of writing and reading are crucially reciprocal? At certain stages of the writing process, are special reading skills necessary? Does the experience of writing increase the need for more meaningful reading activities?
4. Is there a conflict between doing interesting reading activities and the need to prepare students for writing tests? If so, what can we do about it?

These questions can serve as a basis for further exploration of ways to put theory about reading and writing connections into practice.

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STUDENT AUTONOMY AND GROUP RELIANCE IN AN ESL READING/WRITING COURSE

JACK GANTZER and NANCY ERBER CADET

As colleagues teaching at LaGuardia Community College, where writing and reading skills comprise the two main components of the upper level ESL course, the authors taught the same course: Cadet as writing specialist and Gantzer as reading specialist. Together they developed a truly integrated reading or a writing program for ESL students. This combined course took on a life of its own beyond what each had taught separately, because they shared a common theory of language and learning. They agreed, for example, on several points of theory and pedagogy: 1) students work best and most profitably when a course begins where the students *are* in terms of language and knowledge of the world rather than where the course curriculum says the students *should* be; 2) students grow when they are given autonomy and feel they have a right to question texts, assignments, teachers, fellow students and themselves; 3) teachers must give legitimacy to students' questions about their own texts and the texts of others if students are to value their own work and take an interest in what they read and write.

Cadet and Gantzer agreed also that the use of language in the classroom should reflect the same principles as the use of language in the real world. As a theoretical base the authors used the work of Grice (1957, 1975) on the pragmatics of cooperative discourse. Essentially, Grice put forth four tenets of communication: 1) It should be relevant and contribute to the ongoing conversation; 2) it should be informative and exclude information that all members of the conversation share; 3) it should be truthful, not including items without evidence; and 4) it should be clear to listeners and readers. With these principles of cooperative discourse and student autonomy and legitimacy as a foundation, the authors designed a ten week advanced ESL course.

Gantzer and Cadet segmented the course into thematic units of particular interest to adult ESL students: careers, marriage and divorce, bilingual education, U.S. immigration policy, and education reform. Class sessions lasted 70 minutes. Reading and writing lessons either followed each other on a single day or were taught on alternating days. They worked out units in advance so that each teacher knew before the beginning of the unit what the other would cover and how the unit would progress. Most units consisted of graphic pre-reading materials, one lengthy article on the topic, three or four shorter readings, a problem solving writing task, and an integrative reading and writing activity.

NANCY ERBER CADET is an Instructor at LaGuardia Community College. Jack GANTZER is an Instructor at LaGuardia Community College.

What follows is an outline of the class sessions for one unit dealing with bilingual education:

Writing Class I

1. Freewriting
2. Discussion
3. Personal Writing
4. Reading and Discussion
5. Homework: Journal Entries

The first writing class begins with students freewriting on the general topic of the unit. Those who wish to do so may read their freewriting out loud. This writing and reading serves as the basis for students' discussion of their perceptions, opinions, and feelings. Students then write a story (personal narrative) of their own experiences with bilingual education or one which is in some way related. They then read their stories to the other members of their group (3-4 members) to get reactions and feedback. Finally, each group selects one of their stories that they would like to share with the whole class. Homework in this class consists of a journal-writing assignment focused on the activities in the class that day and on students' general impressions of bilingual education.

Reading Class I

1. Small Group Discussion of Graphic Material
2. Oral Presentation
3. Discussion of Presented Information
4. Assignment of General Reading

This class focuses on pre-reading activities. The authors stimulate discussion with graphs, charts, diagrams, advertisements and photographs. Small groups of students analyze and discuss these materials, each group receiving a different set.

For the unit on bilingual education, students form five small groups. One group looks at a map of New York City which is divided up according to the city's ethnic make-up. A second group looks at a zipcode map of Queens with tables of the ethnic composition of those zipcode areas from which the college draws many students. A third group looks at a table of "The Total Foreign Born in New York City in 1980." Another group looks at tables of the ethnic composition of recent immigrations (1965-1980) to New York City. A final group looks at graphs of the general ethnic composition of CUNY, the senior colleges, the community colleges, and a few specific colleges in the system, including LaGuardia.

After a group discussion, a representative from each group presents the material and the group's analysis of it to the class. A student-centered question and answer session follows each presentation.

For homework, students read a general article on bilingual education: "One Language or Two" (Fiske, 1985), which puts the bilingual education movement in the U.S. into historical perspective, mentions various educational practices, the cost of funding, the language groups served, and describes current problems and disagreements on the topic. Students write down any questions they might have about its content or language.

Writing Class II

1. Discussion of General Reading
2. Problem-solving Writing
3. Discussion of Writing Process
4. Homework: Reading; Revision of Writing

The class begins with a review of the pre-reading materials from the previous reading class and a discussion of the general article read for homework. (Depending on the order in which reading and writing classes alternate, the discussion can be done in either the second reading or second writing class). Students then engage in a short problem-solving writing task based on the pre-reading, such as choosing between two schools for their children or younger siblings. Students have approximately thirty minutes to compose a first draft. A general student-directed discussion of the task follows which includes how to address the questions it poses and what problems students have in getting started. Students are encouraged to raise questions regarding the generation of ideas or the selection of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures. For homework, students read the group-selected student narratives written during the first class and write a second draft of the paper completed in the class that day.

Reading Class II

1. Freewriting on the Topic
2. In-Depth Discussion of Main Article
3. Discussion of Student Narratives
4. Homework: Reading Secondary Article

This class begins with students freewriting on the topic of the unit or on the general article to be discussed in class that day. This is followed by an in-depth discussion of the general article for the unit. Rather than focusing on teacher-made questions, the class centers on the questions students wrote down as they read the article at home. There are always an ample number of student questions for a thorough and lively discussion. The class discusses and analyzes the writer's ideas in the

assigned stories. Finally, students discuss how their peers' stories might be used to support or illustrate ideas in the general article.

For homework, groups of three to four students read a secondary article on the general topic. For the unit on bilingual education the articles came from the New York Times over a period of approximately eight months in 1985: "An Alternative to Bilingualism", "Three Bilingual Teaching Methods," "Teaching English to the Poor," and "The Arguments for Bilingual Education." Each group receives a different article and the students in the group are asked to write down any questions about the article as well as a short summary of the article itself.

Reading Class III

1. Freewriting on Secondary Readings
2. Discussion of Secondary Readings
3. Integrative Small Group Discussion
4. Integrative Freewriting

Students freewrite on the topics of the secondary articles and then hold small group discussions of these readings. Their summaries and questions form the basis of these discussions. The whole class is regrouped, each group being made up of students who have read different secondary articles. The instructor provides a series of guide questions for the final integrative discussion; these range from factual true and false items to open-ended questions and statements of opinion which allow students to take a position on the topic based on their unique perspectives of the subject matter. Finally, in a freewriting session, students pull together all the information they have read, written and discussed in this and previous classes.

Writing Class III

Students complete a full-length writing assignment (essay, business or personal letter, or report) based on one or more of the discussion questions in the previous lesson. Typical assignments require comparing and contrasting two school programs or explaining reasons for accepting or rejecting a scholarship to a particular school. Students are encouraged to use the readings, their freewriting, and other students' stories in the production of this composition.

Our approach to an integrated reading and writing course differs in two essential ways from other such efforts. First, it emphasizes student-generated questions rather than the instructor's guidance. It fosters more engaged intellectual activity on the part of the students and encourages autonomy and reliance on peers. Students realize that others have information they do not have, and they learn to value the input of peers rather than to rely solely on the instructor as a source of information and direction. Second, student writing not only follows from the reading but becomes part of the whole class reading, thus enlarging the individual writer's audience and breaking the one-way

communication between students and instructor so common in writing classes. We view student texts as legitimate sources of information and valid materials for analysis. We allow students their voices and encourage those voices to come through in their discussions and writing.

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RESEARCH STUDIES

Current research should determine how best to improve students' chances for success in college. In this section *Kate Parry* presents the results of a study indicating how a skilled ESL reader made use of context in understanding the meaning of new words. *Trudy Smoke* discusses a follow-up study of students who have passed their ESL courses, warning of the jeopardy of "multiple repeaters," and noting factors that apparently contribute to academic success, such as having an English-speaking friend or a job where one is required to speak English.

LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH AN ACADEMIC SUBJECT: A CASE STUDY

KATE PARRY

ESL courses taught at CUNY are designed to prepare students to understand, and to show that they understand, what they are taught. No ESL teacher would claim, however, that we teach the students all that they need to know; this is particularly true in the area of vocabulary. There are so many words to be learned, and so many variations that we generally leave students to learn this aspect of language on their own, in the context of their other courses. How do students do this, and how successful are they?

From the literature it would appear that the task is formidable. Studies of word frequency have indicated that, while 80% of any page of English text will be made up of the most common 2,000 words, the remaining 20% will consist of words that appear rather infrequently, their incidence being closely dependent on subject matter (see Thorndike & Lorge 1944; Kucera & Francis 1967.) On the other hand, experimental studies of how readers derive the meanings of new words from the context suggest that, if students are to learn in this way, they must be exposed to them frequently and the clues must be both explicit and close to the words they are intended to elucidate (see Gipe 1978/9; Carnine, Kameenui & Coyle 1984; Jenkins, Stein & Wysocki 1984). Such findings make the question of how ESL students expand their vocabularies perplexing, for most of the words beyond the most common 2,000 will not appear often enough, it would seem, to be learned without deliberate effort, nor are the contexts in which they appear as carefully devised as are those in the experiments.

In fact, we know very little about how ESL students learn vocabulary, and many questions come to mind. How do they work out the meanings of the many new words they come across? Do they use context or the dictionary? How do they relate the new vocabulary to the lexicons of their first languages (which will frequently map the world differently)? At what stage do they treat particular words as "learned" and begin to use them? Are there significant differences in these respects among individuals? And can such differences be related to the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds? My pilot case study attempted to discover one aspect of this situation: how students learn new words in a content course.

KATE PARRY is Assistant Professor in ESL and Coordinator of Freshman Composition in the Department of English at Hunter College.

My study concentrated on one such course, Introductory Anthropology. I chose anthropology for several reasons: Many ESL students take it, it involves a good deal of reading, and it employs a fair amount of vocabulary which is specialized but for which there are means of expression (though often no translation equivalents) in the students' first languages. I selected one student: a Rumanian who enrolled in the Introductory Anthropology course in September 1986. At that time she had been in this country for two years and had just finished the highest level of Hunter College's ESL courses, in which she got an A. Her task, as the subject of my study, was to identify, in the course of the semester, every new word she came across in her anthropology textbook, make a guess at its meaning, if she could, and write that meaning down in her first language. Then, if she felt it was worth the effort, she could look the word up in the dictionary and write a new gloss in the appropriate column. Thus, for every anthropology reading assignment, she made a list of words, for most of which she supplied definitions and inferences about coming up with a total of six such lists. Each of these was then discussed with a native speaker of Rumanian who was also fluent in English. This enabled me to assess the accuracy of the inferences and to see how they were modified by the use of the dictionary.

Table I summarizes the findings. First, it is clear that the subject student was not too much bothered by vocabulary; although the text is a formal one with plenty of low-frequency words, she only had to stop for a small proportion of them. Second, she made an attempt to infer the meaning of over three-quarters of those words she did not know. Third, while only 10 of the more than 50 inferences she made were exactly right, 35 more were in the right general area of meaning. For example, she quite often guessed a superordinate for a specialized term, like weapon for machete and plant for sow (of seed). In other cases the Rumanian gloss shares a component of meaning with the English but has other components which the English lacks and vice versa. In eight of these cases the interpretation does not affect the overall sense of the text, as, for example, the word atonement in the phrase "various sacrifices of cleansing and atonement," which the student interpreted as iertare, ("forgiveness" in Rumanian). In nine cases, however, there does seem to be a distortion of meaning, albeit a subtle one, as in fallow being interpreted as parasit ("abandoned, deserted"). Finally there are four cases where the inference seems to be in the wrong semantic field altogether. The most serious of these is with the technical word, lineages, which she infers to mean ligaturi ("bonds, ties"). The inference may well have been prompted by a diagram in the text, which uses a tangled series of lines to show relationships within a segmentary lineage system; however, if she were to depend solely on this inference she would seriously misinterpret a basic anthropological term.

Nevertheless, this student does well by guessing; she obviously does not need to use the dictionary much. But she is conscientious, and so she looked up every one of the words she listed, and, the dictionary being monolingual, recorded the definitions in English, most of which are accurate. In five cases she appears to have looked up a word in the wrong form class, as when she writes "to promise to marry" against betrothal; but this is unlikely to present a problem for her receptive use of the item. There are also three cases in which her dictionary definition does not fit the context semantically, two where she appears ignorant of the use of suffixes (-ism and -ship) to form abstractions, and one in which a confusion apparent in her Rumanian gloss does not seem to have been cleared up (she has

existence for subsistence, but in her term paper she uses the word correctly). That, however, is the sum total of her problems.

TABLE I

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Number of words read (approx.)	55,000
Number of words listed	66
Number of words glossed	53
Correct glosses	10
Superordinates glossed	13
Overlapping glosses, no distortion in context	8
Overlapping glosses, distortion in context	9
Glosses in right semantic field, wrong syntax	6
Glosses in wrong semantic field	4
Number of dictionary definitions given	66
Correct definitions	55
Definitions suggesting syntactic problem	5
Definitions suggesting semantic problem	6

All in all it seems that this student is remarkably successful in learning vocabulary. She demonstrates that a great deal of word meaning can be, and is, inferred from context. She uses the context to arrive at a particular semantic field, almost invariably the correct one. The distinctions within the field, however, are not always clear, so for precise understanding she must use a dictionary. This example suggests one pedagogical strategy: While encouraging students to make inferences about meaning, we might also encourage them to compare their inferences with dictionary definitions, and use some class time to demonstrate the distinctions within a semantic field.

A further study might include students of varying backgrounds and abilities. Tests could be administered, for example, on the vocabulary students list and protocols taken to show how they develop these lists. Such a study might give us a picture of how students acquire vocabulary in particular lexical fields and suggest other pedagogical strategies.

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WHAT HAPPENS BEYOND THE DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING ESL COURSES?

TRUDY SMOKE

The research reported here is based on a study of the progress of 198 ESL students beyond the completion of their developmental writing courses in the Department of Academic Skills at Hunter College, from Fall 1980 to Spring 1986. The purpose of the study was to determine: 1) what factors predict success and/or failure in basic skills and freshman writing courses; 2) how students perceive their language learning experience; and 3) what changes can be made in ESL offerings to better serve the needs of this population.

Method

We randomly selected one hundred and ninety-eight ESL students who completed developmental writing between 1980 and 1985 and recorded their initial placement and final CUNY WAT scores. We distributed two questionnaires to these students, one in 1980 and the second in 1986. Students completed the first questionnaire in class, we mailed the second or gave it to students in the form of a personal interview. In the fall of 1986 we reviewed each student's transcript. At that time 98 of the original students were still in attendance at Hunter College.

Transcripts

Of the 98 students still in attendance, 44 had completed freshman composition, ENG 120. Thirty-four students had not passed ENG 120 and 20 students had not yet registered for the course. The number of semesters that appear to elapse in these instances between the completion of developmental writing courses and enrollment in ENG 120 is significant. Of the 44 students who did pass ENG 120, 27 had taken the course immediately after completing developmental writing. Only 5 of them had allowed more than one semester to elapse without taking a writing class.

While the number of times a student takes ESL writing does not absolutely predict success or failure in ENG 120, we found that not one student who had taken upper level developmental writing more than three times had yet passed ENG 120. Students who take this course more than four times generally drop out of college altogether. In addition, no student who took the middle-level developmental writing course three or more times had yet passed ENG 120.

TRUDY SMOKE is a Lecturer at Hunter College.

Questionnaires

The first questionnaire was given in 1980 to 300 students in ESL developmental writing courses. It elicited biographical data and students' perceptions of their interactions with English. Comparing those questionnaires with the students' transcripts five years later, only two items appeared to have had predictive value--jobs and friends. Students who had jobs in which English was spoken "all of the time" or "some of the time" were more successful in college. In addition, students who had "many" or "a few" or even "one" friend with whom they spoke only English completed the developmental sequence more rapidly and performed better in college than students who had no such friends.

However, first language spoken, length of time in the United States, special ESL classes in high school, sex of participants, and language spoken at home did not appear to predict success or failure in college.

The second questionnaire was sent in 1986 to the 198 randomly selected students who had completed developmental writing. There have been 62 responses thus far. Follow-up calls were made and questionnaire interviews were conducted with 14 of the students who were available in the college. The preliminary findings have yielded some interesting information.

Students seemed to feel that they had improved in language skills but not enough to ensure success in college. Asked if they felt their English skills had improved as a result of their ESL courses, 97% believed they had. Yet, when asked if they felt prepared for college courses when they completed remediation, 25% replied that they did not and only 57% responded that they were in fact prepared.

When asked what course they would have added to their ESL sequence, 27% said a pronunciation course, 23% said a speech course, and 24% said a research paper course.

When asked to check as many choices as were applicable to describe difficulties they were having in content courses, 92% of the respondents checked "understanding how to read and study from textbooks"; 87% checked "writing research papers"; 81% marked "talking to the professors"; 74% noted difficulty "taking notes from lecture classes"; and 71% cited problems "answering exam questions."

When asked to check off the easiest aspect of their classes, many students did not respond, and 32% checked "none of the above." Twenty-three percent felt most comfortable "talking to the professors" and 19% "talking to students in class."

Asked what they did when they found that a research paper was required in a class, 56% of the students responded that they felt nervous, while 37% revealed that they felt they should drop the course. This was corroborated in the review of transcripts--many of the ESL students in this study

either withdrew from or did not register for courses in which research papers were required. During the interviews, several students said they had never written a research paper and had dropped any course in which one had been required. Some of these students revealed that no writing had been required since the completion of their developmental ESL writing courses. "I think I forgot how to write," said one student who was a semester away from graduation.

Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest that early intervention is necessary if ESL students are to progress and ultimately succeed in college. The "multiple repeater" seems doomed to drop out of college if some type of outreach program is not instituted as soon as he or she has failed once. Conversation hours with native-speaking peers and/or tutors should be made available to ESL students so that they may develop the friendship with native speakers valuable for adjustment to college. In addition, content area discussion groups designed for ESL students and tutors would be valuable in helping the ESL student develop the communication skills vital for academic discourse.

ESL students who have completed developmental writing should be counseled to take freshman composition as soon as possible. Although it might seem that exposure to English in their other classes would enable ESL students to perform better in freshman composition, this study indicates that those who take freshman composition within one semester of completion of developmental writing have a greater success rate than those who do not.

Colleges should provide bridge or combined content area/basic skills courses to teach such receptive skills as textbook- and literature-reading and listening in lecture classes, and such productive skills as are involved in note-taking, using the library, and writing research papers. These are minimum competencies that are required of college students and which are not commonly taught in developmental programs.

Finally, responses to the questionnaires suggest that students can offer valuable information about their own language learning experience. The study as a whole points to a need for more detailed and rigorous investigations into the ESL students' experiences in higher education, toward the goal of improving that experience.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Helping non-traditional or high-risk students succeed may require educational institutions to adapt to both the affective and cognitive needs of those students. In this section, *John Devine* et al. describe a program in which graduate-student tutors work one-to-one with Limited English Proficient (LEP) high school students in helping them overcome both personal and school-related barriers to completing their education. *Carlos Yorio* et al. describe a project at Lehman College in which a language facilitation component added to the ESL curriculum encourages students to discuss and deal with the language learning process and the problems and responsibilities that arise from it. Making students more involved in and responsible for their education was the focus of the campus-wide Teaching from Strengths project at Roxbury Community College, described by *Adele MacGowan*. Finally, *Frank Kehl* describes the CUNY Pre-Freshman Summer Program, designed to ease the transition into college by offering instruction in basic skills, counseling, tutoring, and financial aid to the growing number of non-traditional students, including ESL, who enter the University.

PERSON TO PERSON: THE STAY IN SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

JOHN DEVINE and MIRIAM EISENSTEIN with TIMOTHY EBSWORTH, JUDITH HORVATH, JOHN MANCUSO, and LAUREN SUNSTEIN

Editor's Note: The Stay in School Partnership (SSP) program is a collaborative effort on the part of New York University's School of Education, Health, Nursing and Arts Professions and the New York City Board of Education to encourage youngsters at risk to complete their high school education. This article describes the work, from the point of view of the NYU participants, with limited English proficient (LEP) learners in a New York City school, referred to as Park High. (The names of the school and students are fictitious in order to preserve the anonymity of the learners participating in the project.)

Park High appears big and frightening, especially to foreign students, and is sometimes unresponsive to them as individuals. Of the 103 high schools in the city, the Board of Education has identified ten schools with the most severe dropout problems, the worst attendance patterns, the lowest achievement scores, and the highest truancy rates. Park High is representative of the group.

Only about 20% of entering freshmen at Park High actually stay in school long enough to graduate. The school has a very high percentage of recent immigrants from the Carribean and Third World countries. Teachers and students at Park High function under very difficult circumstances. The school is overcrowded, and violent incidents occur every day. Books and materials in the classrooms are in short supply. Teachers, generally, have not been trained to deal with the intergroup conflicts that often arise. They also find it difficult to devote adequate time to the needs of individual students, some of whose literacy and mathematical skills are years behind what is considered average for high school. In addition, the bureaucracy within the school makes it particularly hard for students who lack the linguistic and interpersonal skills to make their needs known.

THE SSP PROGRAM

Because of the problems encountered by learners at Park High, we envisioned the role of the graduate tutor/counselor as being that of a mediator between the student and the institution. While a primary purpose of this program is academic--to help students with English, math, or any other

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JOHN DEVINE is Project Director of the Stay in School Partnership Program and Adjunct Professor at New York University. MIRIAM EISENSTEIN is Associate Professor in the TESOL Program at New York University. TIMOTHY EBSWORTH, JUDITH HORVATH, JOHN MANCUSO, and LAUREN SUNSTEIN were at the time of the conference graduate students at New York University and tutors in the "Stay in School Partnership Program."

academic problem--a crucial objective is to establish a personal relation between our graduate student tutors and a small group of high school students identified as being at risk of dropping out. We hope to have a human impact and, in some cases, to act as advocates for the students in the school. An additional purpose of the program is to use the NYU participants as change agents within the school, to foster in teachers the feeling that these students can succeed, and to explore with teachers recent developments in the fields of ESL and bilingual education.

The original idea of the SSP program was to create a one-to-one relationship between a graduate student/tutor and a high school student at risk. A pilot program the previous year showed that while some students benefited from a one-to-one experience, others were more successful interacting with a few peers and a tutor in a small-group setting. At the end of the pilot program only two of the fifty-one students in the program left school, in both cases because of pregnancy. While these results cannot be attributed directly to the SSP program, school officials believe the tutoring program has had a positive impact.

One difficulty we have encountered is in scheduling students for tutoring/counseling sessions at a time not detrimental to their classwork in a school so overcrowded that there is little flexibility. Originally we planned to serve only students whose difficulties were not severe and who had no discernible disabilities or serious disciplinary problems, and many of the students in the program fit this original profile. However, we discovered some students with serious problems who would get no special help if we did not attempt to serve their needs.

Students are generally referred to our program by the assistant principal, teachers, or other students, because of attendance problems and/or academic difficulties. We have also had a number of self-referrals.

Our goal is to guide the students, as Sizer (1984) advises, while they are performing rather than to lecture them about what they ought to do. Many additional roles for us have emerged, corresponding to the multiple needs of the students--medical problems, family difficulties, sibling and peer relationships, the need for after-school jobs, fears of inter-ethnic contact, and lack of security within the school and in the neighborhood. We make appropriate referrals both to school authorities and to community-based organizations, settlement houses, and medical resources.

Teachers in the school regard us differently--some recognize us as a valuable resource, while others question the value of the time we spend with students and appear threatened by the influence of "outsiders." We have found the most successful approach is to create opportunities for direct contact between teachers and tutor/counselors in both informal settings, such as the teachers' cafeteria, and in classroom visits and workshops.

THE STUDENTS

The following are four personal observations of the Park High students, written by the NYU tutor/counselors.

Judith's Observations

Jose came from the Dominican Republic and has been in the United States for about a year. His attendance was poor, as was his classroom performance. He didn't want to do his homework or take exams.

I tried to gain Jose's confidence and find out why he avoids homework and examinations. Towards the end of last semester I had a really long, deep talk with him and discovered that he feels that nobody cares about him. His parents don't encourage him to study or do homework. I tried to tell him that I really cared how he did. I wasn't sure whether I was being effective with him until the beginning of this term. The first thing he did was come down to the room in the basement where we work to see me. He was really excited about his classes.

Jose's enthusiasm lasted about two weeks, during which time he consistently brought his homework and had me help him with it. Currently, he has two regular ESL teachers and is continuing to work well with the one he likes. Unfortunately, he doesn't like the other one at all and feels she doesn't treat him with respect. I think it is especially important within Hispanic culture for children to feel that their teachers show them respect. I guess when Jose acts up in class, the teacher says "You're fresh. Get out of the room!" So now he refuses to do any of the homework. I have to find some way to help him see that he's only hurting himself. Hopefully in the future we can generate some more enthusiasm.

Lauren's Obeservations

Pierre is nineteen years old. He came to our program last year directly from Haiti. Since the number of Haitians in the school is below twenty, there is no bilingual education program in French or Haitian Creole. Furthermore, the Haitian students often feel lost and overwhelmed in the school, which is 73% Hispanic. Although Pierre is an excellent student, he spoke little English when he arrived, and his teachers were concerned about him. He was referred to our program along with eleven other Haitian boys and girls.

Pierre wanted to continue in the program this year, and we made a decision to let him stay although he was experiencing academic success. This year we have focused on

his writing. Pierre wants to go to college, and we are trying to assist him in obtaining financial assistance and applying to the University. This was all very positive and exciting for him. But in the course of events, it turned out that his student visa had expired and now he is no longer in the country legally. We have talked to lawyers and to the Caribbean Students' Organization at N.Y.U. about this matter.

I have been surprised by Pierre's calm demeanor in light of all this. I know that his uncle, who is a legal resident, is very worried. Pierre's parents are still in Haiti and he is living with his uncle. We now must face the responsibility of raising his hopes under difficult circumstances. We have discovered a way of getting a new student visa for him; this involves his returning to Haiti to meet with American authorities there and then coming back to the U.S. to enroll in a college.

John's Observations

Eva came from Puerto Rico about five years ago and has made several trips back and forth since then. She was not communicative at first, but I discovered a way to get through to her. One day I saw in her notebook that the last twenty pages or so consisted of letters that she had written. She said that she felt all right about having me read them although it was like a diary for her. The letters were written to Jesus Christ, to her boyfriend, and to her cousin. She looked through them and picked out one for me to look at in order to help her writing. It was written in very good Spanish.

The letter was addressed to Jesus, and in it she discussed a lot of her personal problems such as whether she should lose her virginity (her boyfriend was pressuring her about it). I thought I would insult her if I ignored this issue, so, pointing to certain sections of the letter, I asked her, "What are you going to do about this?" "What do you think about this--is this good, is this bad?" She turned to me and said, "Well, what do *you* think?" She gave me her opinion, and we went on from there using her letters as a basis for the lessons. We tried translating some of the ideas into English. Some of the other letters she showed me were in English. They were beautiful letters, spilling out her emotions. We talked about the contents, and then we went on to correct certain aspects of structure and style.

This approach has been working out well. In fact, Eva has written me a letter, and now we're in the process of writing letters to each other ...I address the grammatical problems; to address her personal needs, we are referring her to a bilingual counselor.

Timothy's Observations

I've been working with a young girl named Mimi. She's sixteen; she's very outgoing but seems distracted. She arrived from Ecuador at the beginning of the year. Mimi has a slight speech defect, and she has some problems that might not be perceived right away by a teacher. For example, in Ecuador they don't study English until high school. As she is in ninth grade, she had never studied it. Mimi seemed nonetheless to be persevering in spite of her difficulties. But then, little by little, she revealed more of herself. For example, one day she said she had to go to a government agency, but when I asked whether she had a problem, she said, "No, it's all right." On another occasion she said that she thought she was very ugly and unattractive ...finally, around Christmas she mentioned that her ear bled at night; she had been referred to a specialist by a doctor in a local clinic.

After Christmas, she mentioned that she went to the local government office every day because she worked there. Yet in the beginning she had told me she didn't work -- that she went home after school, stayed at home, and didn't go out because she was afraid to go out on the street. I learned that no one where she lives works. Her mother and two married sisters live with her. In effect she's the breadwinner for the whole family. Recently, she mentioned that she was giving up work. All these disclosures have come with time, and now she's in the process of resolving some of the difficulties in her life.

All the time we seem to have had a close relationship, and we've done good work together. I've been able to help Mimi with her speech problem, but I'm concerned that she's not getting much exposure to American culture. Her family speaks only Spanish and so do the women she has worked for. Her friends in school speak Spanish as well, and she really doesn't feel free to make friends within the larger community. In light of these problems, though, I feel that she's done well. Working with Mimi has been personally rewarding.

CONCLUSION

These brief descriptions are representative of the range of learners who are involved in the SSP program. Though the problems reported by the tutors are human, personal, and social issues, not ESL problems, we believe with Krashen (1982) that affective variables have a crucial influence on success in school in general and language acquisition in particular (Krashen, 1982). So, in a sense, attention to these non-linguistic factors is crucial for learners if language acquisition is to take place.

We are continuing to work with learners in Park High and in other New York City schools. In addition to sessions with students we have progressed through teacher/tutor workshops and classroom observations. Discussions have centered on a range of issues, including ESL, classroom management, standard and nonstandard dialects, reading, writing, and personal values. We recognize the limitations of our program since at this point we can only serve a small segment of the population in need. But to the extent that we can make a difference in the lives of the youngsters we work with and encourage a more responsive school environment, we are pleased with our limited success.

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LANGUAGE FACILITATION: A WAY OF IMPROVING THE ODDS

CARLOS YORIO with PILAR ENRIGHT and ELAINE KLEIN

The affective domain, which encompasses such variable qualities as attitude, motivation, and self-esteem, has been recognized as having a potential role in the successful acquisition of a second language. Over the past few years, these factors have been a particular concern of the ESL program at Lehman. ESL students are enrolled full-time in the college and are expected to maintain certain academic standards and to progress at a defined rate. However, such factors as absence and tardiness, disruptive classroom behavior, and lack of commitment often retard their progress. Lehman College has responded to this challenge with several new initiatives.

In addition to intensive language training, the ESL program at Lehman provides a triple-support system that supplements the regular support services of the college: 1) the ESL Resource Center, which provides tutoring and self-study programs; 2) the Academic Advising Center, under the guidance and auspices of the Office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies; and 3) the Language Facilitation component, which addresses affective issues in the students' language learning.

The language facilitation component focuses on three general areas of student difficulty: affective, strategic, and linguistic. Affective problems stem from a home, work and/or social environment which may not be conducive to the successful acquisition of English. These include lack of family support and guidance, exclusive use of the native language outside of college, personal or family-related problems (children, etc.), conflicts arising from ethnic or cultural clashes, ill-defined or unrealistic goals, and lack of strong motivation and commitment. Strategic problems are those associated with poor preparation for the academic demands of a four-year college, such as poor study habits and time-management skills and under-utilization of school resources (tutors, counselors, laboratories, libraries, etc.). Linguistic difficulties are the specific language problems impeding the successful acquisition of English. The most common language problems we have identified are low literacy in the native language, fossilization of the second language, and insufficient understanding of the complexity of the second-language acquisition process.

The program director conceived the project and is ultimately responsible for it. Two facilitators with TESOL, counseling, and second language backgrounds created and implemented the program,

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CARLOS YORIO is Director of Programs in ESL and Professor in the Department of Speech and Theater at Lehman College and at the Graduate Center of The City University of New York. PILAR ENRIGHT is Language Facilitator in the ESL Program at Lehman College. ELAINE KLEIN is Language Facilitator in the ESL Program at Lehman College

which serves the entire ESL student body. The administration of the college has been involved in the program from its inception and has offered continued assistance and support.

The language facilitation program was designed to help students a) accept the language learning process as their own responsibility; b) acknowledge the critical role that successful acquisition of English plays in the achievement of their goals; c) discover their particular learning styles and successful strategies for language learning; d) identify conflicts or barriers blocking them from succeeding; and e) create and implement plans to deal with or eliminate these barriers. We expected to see significant changes in students' attitudes and behavior, resulting in the facilitation of language learning and a consequent increase in retention, promotion, and mainstreaming rates.

The facilitators met with almost all ESL classes one hour a week for a total of five hours over a period of six to seven weeks. Since these sessions were to take place during class time, instructors were given the alternative of not participating if they did not wish to. In these early sessions, we introduced students to the concept of examining affective, strategic and linguistic issues in their own language learning. Through a series of discussions and exercises aimed at increasing self-awareness, students began to identify successful learning strategies that they could adapt to their particular needs, and also to acknowledge problems. Among the discussion topics were the opportunities to use English open to non-native speakers at various levels of proficiency, the attributes of a good language learner, the barriers preventing second language learners from succeeding (and appropriate responses to these conflicts), the examination of time-management strategies, and the importance of reading and cultural awareness.

For the remainder of the term, the facilitators, individually or in small groups, met students who wished to continue participating in the facilitation program. Facilitators also met with other students referred to them by instructors who felt the students were having difficulties or were not making adequate progress. Small-group sessions usually dealt with general problems such as time-management and test-taking strategies. Individual sessions tended to be more personal and covered such problems as family responsibilities, personality conflicts with individual instructors or other students in the class, or feelings of failure and frustration. Initial individual sessions concentrated on identifying and defining the conflict, whereas follow-up sessions focused on specific ways to deal with it. These later meetings proved to be essential because it was only after the student had been made to grapple with the problem that clear understanding began to emerge. Sometimes just "talking about it" was sufficient; at other times, the sessions continued throughout the term, and there were yet other times when the problem was beyond the expertise of the facilitators. In these cases appropriate referrals were made to the psychiatric counselors, the financial aid office, the Speech Pathology Clinic, or to other services relevant to the students' needs.

During the course of the facilitation sessions, most of the problems that we had anticipated did indeed surface, and new issues also emerged. One was that students tended to place responsibility for their language failure outside themselves, blaming bilingual programs in high school and the quality

of the ESL instruction they had received. They also suffered from low self-esteem. Even the more fluent speakers expressed feelings of embarrassment when they found themselves in social situations demanding interaction with native speakers of English. Many students also felt that even very English-proficient second language speakers "looked down" on them because of their poor language skills.

We had anticipated that many students might be having problems learning English because they lacked definite academic or career goals. This assumption turned out to be incorrect. What many students lacked, however, was a clear understanding of the degree of commitment needed to acquire the English language skills required for college. This resulted in frustratingly slow progress, which, in turn, resulted in disinterest and failure.

Within the strategic domain, i.e., the area of strategies for coping with academic demands, we found that despite special orientation classes (Freshman Colloquia) many students had little knowledge of the college programs, requirements, and resources. In terms of time-management, students appeared to devote much more time to content classes than to ESL and found that they had little time left for ESL work. In their ESL classes, students often did not know how to interpret their instructors' feedback. Because they seldom asked for clarification or explanations, students often did not know what was expected of them or why they had failed. Many of these students did their homework "for the teacher," because it had been assigned, rather than because there was something in it for them. In general, the students who were having trouble showed very poor study habits and lack of understanding of what they had to do. They appeared simply to be attending classes, their presence being their only contribution.

Linguistically, we also noted some unexpected problems. Many students spoke (and wrote) "Street English" only, and had a very hard time understanding or accepting the notion of standard academic English. We were, of course, aware of their limitations in terms of dialect and register, but were surprised at their initial resistance to the notion of standard academic language usage. Other students, while not hostile to the idea of academic usage, felt inadequate to the task of learning it. We need to address these conflicting notions about the validity of various dialects and registers and the variation of language in social situations, if students are to accept their own identities and aspirations.

At the end of the first year of our project, we are pleased with what we have accomplished but we realize that we have merely scratched the surface. There is no doubt in our minds that many students are not learning a second language well because they do not know how to do it; they do not know what they are up against. We know that the facilitation program has raised the consciousness of many ESL students at Lehman and that, by doing so, we have made them better students.

IMPROVING LEARNING BY TEACHING FROM STUDENTS' STRENGTHS

ADELE MACGOWAN

Traditionally we focus on what to teach, rather than on how to learn. Most of our teaching methods bespeak a belief that if material is well-organized and presented, and if students are attentive and studious, learning will occur. Then, when students fail or underachieve, we claim they either haven't studied or that they lack the basic skills or intelligence required for effective learning. Even when we address these problems with skills courses and other types of assistance, students' patterns of underachievement and failure tend to persist, especially among students of certain cultural groups. There are, however, some impressive exceptions, based on the principle that people learn best from their strengths. These may include their native ways of using language, their interests, their prior knowledge and experiences, their innate drive to learn, their creativity, and their preferred ways and paces of learning.

Roxbury Community College in Boston, serving a population of Black Americans, Hispanics, Cape Verdeans and other minorities in the Boston area, typically graduates only ten percent of the students who matriculate. The other ninety percent drop out, usually due to academic underachievement or failure. The college had made many attempts to address this problem, including offering developmental courses, tutoring, counseling, mastery learning courses, and culturally relevant curricula. But the problem persisted. Students simply could not cope with the demands of college-level work, and in addition had outside responsibilities that were heavy enough to make success in college even more unlikely. The Teaching from Strength Project offered a new opportunity.

The project was inspired by the work of Shirley Brice Heath (1983), a cultural anthropologist and linguist, whose ethnographic research in classrooms and communities has revealed two very important phenomena. The first is that large groups of people are not socialized into the "mainstream" culture's ways of behaving, valuing and believing, which contributes to failure in schools where "mainstream" ways of using language, learning, and literacy are the norm. The second is that when schools work from non-mainstream students' strengths, those students can achieve just as much as mainstream students. Heath's Way with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms (1987), describes the culturally learned ways of using language in different groups of Americans, establishes mainstream schools as culturally unfamiliar to some of these groups, and shows how some teachers taught from the strengths of students from those groups, helping them achieve as never before.

ADELE MACGOWAN is Assistant Professor in the Department of ESL at City College; she served for two years as Project Director of the Teaching for Strengths Project at Roxbury Community College under a FIPSE grant.

We were so impressed both by Dr. Heath's understanding of students' strengths and by her successes that we decided to try her model at Roxbury Community College, and she agreed to help us. Our first task was to start observing and taking field notes on how we used language and how we valued others' ways of using language. We learned that our ways of behaving, valuing, and believing were culturally narrow, largely as a result of our primary group socialization and of our long tenure in the mainstream culture of schools. We realized that we taught and ran the college in very mainstream ways, despite our mission to serve minority students from non-mainstream cultures.

We next learned to do classroom ethnograpy and to find out how language was used in the classroom, especially looking at student participation. We took field notes and found that we did almost all of the talking, called on the same students, asked questions to test students' knowledge, allowed for very brief answers, and otherwise took up most of the air time. We knew students weren't learning much with this approach, nor were they learning much from their textbooks. We discussed ways of helping students "enter the conversation" about the subject matter. We reasoned that if they were conversant enough about the subject matter, they would gain more from lectures and readings and write better about them.

At this point, Dixie Goswami of Clemson University came to Roxbury to train faculty in her "writing to learn process," defined as having students think on paper on a regular basis. Many faculty had students spend the last ten minutes of class writing about what they had learned and telling of any confusion. Professor Goswami urged teachers to respond to that writing by planning lessons according to students' questions and by writing general letters to the class. These letters, which she called a "running course syllabus," would clarify content and help students make connections between lessons. Professor Goswami also recommended that students respond to readings in double-entry journals, writing summaries or important quotations on the left side of the page, and their questions or comments on the right. This technique encourages students to "talk" with texts. All of these methods enable students to use their strengths to become learners, readers, thinkers, and writers.

Roxbury adapted other recommendations of Dr. Heath as well, such as giving students a lot of responsibility, autonomy, and authority, and treating them like mathematicians, historians, linguists, social scientists, and so on. She suggested that students teach classes, help formulate the questions of the course, take turns recording what happened in class, become researchers, write chapters of textbooks or the textbooks themselves, and conduct similar projects. In addition, Dr. Heath recommended broad institutional changes. The first, intended to address students' social-emotional needs, was piloted almost immediately at Roxbury, and has been adopted permanently. Groups of incoming students now participate in a seminar that meets weekly. Students study together, keep track of each other, work out academic problems together, prepare for transfers and jobs, and discuss socially-learned patterns of behaving, valuing, and believing. Teams consisting of one teacher, one counselor, and one administrator work with these groups.

About three-fourths of the faculty and half of the other professional staff at Roxbury participated in the project and almost all conducted research to improve learning. One chemistry teacher had her students write to learn at the end of every class, but otherwise taught the course in her traditional manner. Her students scored 11 points higher on the final than had any previous class for many years (Kanter, 1986). A developmental science teacher assigned "write to learn" in his class, and also had them conduct classes, formulate scientific questions, initiate and monitor greenhouse projects, and discuss material in class. Not only did the class do well on the final, but students wrote three times as much in their journals as students in other classes, and four times as many "facts." They became scientists through their high level of participation (Julien, 1986).

An ESL class became ethnographers of communication, collecting language data on tapes, transcribing it, and analyzing it with classmates. The students corresponded with Professor Heath on their findings and used her feedback to do further research and eventually to write rules for language use. These students also showed high attendance rates, high involvement in course work, and much improved language skills (Reilly, 1986).

English faculty at Roxbury also experimented in teaching from students' strengths. Tangvik (1986) had students perform and analyze "raps" and favorite stories from their primary cultural groups, as an inroad to consideration of more traditional poetry and prose. Byerly (1986) used oral histories and techniques like writing and reading on themes central to students' lives in order to bring out their voices and to enable them to connect their strengths, needs, and concerns to the mainstream academic world. Others used reading-response techniques and assigned works representative of students' cultural heritage.

Our field notes were full of anecdotes revealing that we and our students were becoming more culturally aware. Teachers who began teaching from students' strengths unanimously reported higher levels of student engagement and activity in courses, improved student performance in written assignments and on tests, and a sense that they as teachers were addressing individual students' needs better. The teachers also realized that their students were much smarter and more interesting than they--the teachers--had imagined. Teachers reported that they were learning a lot from their students and that classes were more fun than before. As students took on more responsibility and became more autonomous, teachers had time to work with individuals and spent far less time instructing the whole group.

In an effort to involve faculty across the curriculum, a group of faculty designed and are now piloting a developmental curriculum in which groups of fifty students, divided according to major, work with teams of four teachers from various disciplines on a semester project aimed at the resolution of some community problem related to the students' majors. Students formulate the questions of the course, do research in and out of school, and work to solve the problem, using teachers and textbooks as resources. They document their work in writing and get extensive feedback on it. They collaborate as they attempt to put their plans into action, and write a project summary at the end.

The Teaching from Strengths project has produced impressive results at Roxbury in improving learning and in helping faculty acknowledge and use students' strengths. While there is some quantitative proof of the project's effectiveness, the qualitative results are much more powerful. They reflect a transformation of people and classrooms, with people learning and teaching in a community of learners, and with success as common now in some classes as failure was before. Teachers who teach from students' strengths no longer strive to "cover" a predetermined curriculum; rather, they seek to help students become experts in their subject area.

Those faculty who participated in the project now expect their students to excel. They have changed the way language is used in their classrooms. Instead of lectures, drills and tests, their classrooms are now workshops and research communities where all are engaged in academic dialogues. They have changed the social relations in their classrooms and, thus, the power relations. Students have greater responsibility, yet also greater authority, control, and autonomy. And due to the kind of research these teachers and students have done, they have changed their expectations for themselves. Several teachers have also published their research or presented it at professional conferences.

Since the project was only funded for two years, some of its activities, like training and research, came to a halt at the end of those two years. However, individual teachers continue to research and innovate to improve learning and to help other teachers do the same.

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THE MODEL AND ITS VARIATIONS: THE PRE-FRESHMAN SUMMER PROGRAM OF CUNY'S OFFICE OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS (SEEK AND COLLEGE DISCOVERY)

FRANK KEHL

Editor's Note: SEEK and College Discovery are funded programs which address the basic skills needs of disadvantaged students at, respectively, the four-year and two-year colleges. The SEEK model for the prefreshman summer program has now been adopted for ESL students, who form a growing segment of the CUNY population. The editors have chosen to include this description in a publication devoted to teaching ESL because they feel it is a highly successful model for bringing ESL students into the college community.

A six-week pre-matriculation voluntary summer program has been run by CUNY's Office of Special Programs for six years. Some 4,000 students from 17 campuses have participated, improving their basic skills, reducing the time spent in remedial courses, and easing their transition from high school or workplace to college. Detailed research and evaluation, both quantitative and qualitative, have confirmed the program's effects on retention. The model has been used as a prototype for CUNY's regularly admitted students. In 1985, an ESL pilot program was added to the Pre-Freshman Summer Program's usual offerings of remedial reading, writing, math, tutoring, counseling, and financial aid.

Students, Scope, State, Significance

Who are the students who participate in the Pre-Freshman Summer Program? Hochwald's (1986) profile of one program is typical:

> The students reflected CUNY's ethnic diversity, with Blacks and Hispanics accounting for over 80 percent. Under two-thirds were native English speakers; about one-quarter were born outside the United States Mainland. Almost all were the first in their families or the first in their generation to attend college. About 70 percent graduated from high school in the previous three years. The rest were mostly women who had quit school, had families, gone back to get General Equivalency Diplomas, and were trying to get off welfare. One student in this latter group was the mother of three children, an immigrant from St. Vincent. She had quit school at age 15 to raise her siblings after her mother's death. She worked as a housekeeper and a nurse's aide, experiences

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FRANK KEHL coordinates the SEEK-Funded Retention Research Grant Program and the overall retention research effort in the Office of Special Programs, CUNY.

that convinced her that, given the chance, she would make a good nurse. Knowing an older Vincentian woman who had become a nurse after attending the CUNY college in question sealed her conviction: '. . .if that woman could do it, so can I.'

The Pre-Freshman Summer Program grows out of the congruence of New York's and CUNY's commitment to disadvantaged students, and the reality that large numbers of CUNY's entering freshmen have basic skills deficiencies that cause them to fail one or more of the CUNY Freshman Skills Assessment Program (FSAP) tests in reading, writing, and math.

To serve approximately 750 of such students on the 17 CUNY campuses, New York State budgeted nearly a million dollars in 1986 and New York City budgeted about $270,000. These included earmarked funds for instruction, financial assistance, and evaluation.

The Model

The basic design of the SEEK Pre-Freshman Summer Program is four-plus-one-plus-one. Four components offered during the six weeks of the summer session are the same as those offered in the SEEK and College Discovery programs during the academic year: 1) remedial instruction in the basic skills of reading, writing, and math; 2) counseling; 3) tutoring; and 4) student financial aid. To these are added an evaluation component, and the Spring Pre-Freshman Summer Program Seminars, a combined feedback and planning component.

The objective is to provide those students who have barely failed the FSAP tests with an opportunity to wrap up that part of their preparation for college before the Fall term begins; for those students who fail by a wide margin, the objective is to move them up one or two levels of remediation during the summer. Counseling is usually handled through weekly or bi-weekly orientation classes, individual sessions, and academic advising. The orientation classes focus on study skills and attitudes, career exploration, and the process of constructing a Fall semester schedule. Tutoring is done either in class with the teacher, or out of class, often in a tutoring or learning center. Stipends are given to cover carfare, lunch, and incidental expenses.

Evaluation, quantitative and qualitative, is both central and campus-based. Central Office teams do site visit observations and interviews on each campus, changing the focus each summer on various aspects of the program. Outside evaluators design and implement evaluations. Data includes pre- and post-test scores of the Skills Assessment Tests, show rates, enrollment, completion, and registration in the Fall semester.

At the one- or two-day Spring feedback and planning sessions, known as the Pre-Freshman Summer Program Seminars, strong program components and certain instructors from the previous summer are showcased. Common weak points are addressed and analyzed, sometimes with the assistance of experts. These seminars have had an informal function as well--to bring together nearly

50 administrators, teachers, and counselors from all of CUNY's undergraduate colleges to talk practically and concretely about all aspects of one program.

This model is based on several assumptions. First, it assumes that students' affective and cognitive needs must be addressed simultaneously. Second, it assumes that integration of the components, and of the Pre-Freshman Summer Program with the Fall and Spring academic program, is a worthwhile goal. Third, it attempts to create for the six weeks a communal environment that is creative, caring, and holistic. Faculty have said that it gives them an unpressured context in which to experiment pedagogically. Students have noted that the faculty is more caring than those they have experienced in high school, and that the atmosphere is conducive to making new college friends.

The Variations

Each college puts its particular mark on the Pre-Freshman Summer Program. The Central Office encourages this diversity-within-unity, and holds up exemplary practices for emulation. Some examples:

LaGuardia Community College emphasizes combining work and study through its co-op education program. In its counseling, students clarify their values, imagine fantasy careers, learn how to research particular occupational titles, take interest inventories (sometimes with computer assistance), and in general overcome the tendency to clutch onto a single, often poorly understood career option. This approach frees up time for counseling study skills, and enables the Pre-Freshman Summer Program student to better prepare for the first co-op assignment.

John Jay College of Criminal Justice brings extra life and relevance to the reading and writing classes by scheduling a day at New York State Supreme Court. The students prepare in language classes through role-playing and other activities, and after visiting the Court, write about or dramatize parts of their visit in class.

Lehman College/SEEK has a counseling pedagogy structured around themes of responsiblity for self and for others, and contractual commitments. These themes inform and determine the writing assignments and the reading passages the students will deal with in the Pre-Freshman Summer Program English classes. The Program's cognitive side unfolds around its counseling orientation.

At BMCC there is considerable use of peer tutor-mentors, and much of the academic work is carried out in small groups. Further, BMCC integrates peer-based projects, such as an end-of-term newsletter, into its reading and writing classes.

Quantitative Outcomes

- Over seven years, an average of 91 percent of enrollees completed the SEEK Pre-Freshman Summer Program, and over five years, 92 percent in the College Discovery Pre-Freshman Summer Program did likewise.

- The seven year average for Fall enrollment after the summer program is 94 percent for both SEEK and College Discovery summer program completers. For the "allocants"--those requesting and accepted for Fall admission at a given college--who did not participate in the Pre-Freshman Summer Program, the comparable rate was 58 percent over six years for SEEK and 48 percent over five years for College Discovery.

- Retention after one semester of enrollment was nine percent higher for SEEK Pre-Freshman Summer Program students when compared with non-Pre-Freshman Summer Program students; for College Discovery it was 10 percent.

- After six weeks, 30 percent of the Pre-Freshman Summer Program students who failed the reading pre-test on entry passed the post-test; in writing, 22 percent passed, and in math, 57 percent passed.

Qualitative Outcomes

Both students and faculty report satisfaction with the six-week program. Students consistently say the faculty is more caring than those they have encountered in high school. Students particularly like the chance to familiarize themselves with the college scene in a low-pressure, no-risk environment where they also note they can make new friends who have similar aspirations.

Faculty like the smaller than average class sizes--frequently 10-20 students--the rich tutor-student ratios, and the relatively high motivation of the summer students. Both faculty and students note a feeling of community and camaraderie generally lacking in a commuter college setting.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The Pre-Freshman Summer Program should be more thoroughly integrated into the year-round operations of a campus SEEK or College Discovery program, smoothing the transition between summer and fall curricula, and eliminating redundancy in certain courses. Faculty should explore innovative modalities for teaching writing such as computer-assisted instruction and weekly intensive instruction. More research is necessary on the long-term benefits of having successfully completed the six-week program.

Thousands of students have by now experienced the positive push into college made possible by the Pre-Freshman Summer Program. Dedicated educators in CUNY continue to experiment with the model and with other efforts to facilitate students' transition to college so as to build a firm foundation for a successful college experience.

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"IMPROVING THE ODDS"

Reported by LEN FOX

Editor's Note: At the final plenary session of the 1987 CUNY ESL Council Conference, five educators gave brief opening statements on ways to reshape the college educational environment to improve the odds of students remaining in college. Their remarks are reported below.

John Fanselow, Teachers College, Columbia University, used an analogy to describe present efforts on retention:

> Imagine a group of soldiers surrounded by enemy troops. These soldiers have two options. One is to keep tightening the circle within which they are held prisoner and to have allies outside drop in bits of ammunition and food every now and then. If they do this, their situation may change a little over time, but they will still be under siege; nothing much is going to happen. The second option is for one or two soldiers to break out of the circle for the purpose of getting help from the outside or finding a new way to strike back at the enemy. This option is more likely to be successful, to change the status quo. In the matter of retention, we have the same options. We can tinker around inside our circle, improve a few percentage points here and there; however, simultaneous with this activity, we need a few people who will break out of the circle and start something totally different. It is in this kind of activity that the most progress will be made.

What does breaking out of the circle mean in regard to retention? In Fanselow's opinion, we have to think about ways in which we can break out of the circle of conventional education in order to make real progress in improving the odds for our students. We need to study conditions in which learning takes place and adapt them. For example, people seem to learn well in small groups, in which they engage in "pleasant" activities and in which learning is aided by a sense of community (as in a group chorus). Professor Fanselow recalled that when he was in Nigeria he observed that students benefited educationally by living in boarding schools because in their home environment, they did not have sufficient time or opportunity to read, write or study. He suggested that young people these

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MICHAEL BROOKES is Professor in the Office of the Dean of Faculty at LaGuardia Community College. JOHN FANSELOW, Teachers College, Columbia University, works in TESOL programs in New York City and Tokyo. BARBARA GONZALES is Associate Professor in the Department of Developmental Skills at Borough of Manhattan Community College. ELI PLOTKIN is Director of the Office of High School Bilingual/ESL Programs, New York City Board of Education. ELEANOR PONTES is Deputy to the Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Office of Student Affairs and Special Programs at CUNY.

days are getting little parental support at home and little support from huge, impersonal educational institutions, and implied that we might try a radical approach such as setting up boarding schools.

Michael Brookes, Office of the Dean of Faculty, LaGuardia Community College, described several programs at LaGuardia designed for high-risk students: the cluster program, the Integrated Skills Reinforcement (ISR) program, the Middle College High School, and the articulation initiative.

The LESA (Limited English Speaking Ability) cluster allows groups of ESL students to take three basic skills courses (reading, writing, and ESL) together, and offers them a range of support services such as bilingual counseling, a bilingual librarian, and bilingual staff in the financial office and The Office of the Registrar. For new Liberal Arts students, a series of clusters offers four required introductory level courses that are thematically linked. Students in these clusters have been shown to have a higher pass rate than those in similar courses which are taught by the same faculty members but which do not form part of clusters. Also, a new ESL initiative keeps lower-level students together with the same teacher for two consecutive quarters (20 weeks) allowing students more time to master the language and build a sense of community.

The Integrated Skills Reinforcement (ISR) year-long program was developed by and for faculty. Content area instructors re-think and re-design the syllabus of one of their courses. They develop specific activities and materials and incorporate classroom techniques from basic skills courses so that writing, reading, speaking, and listening are used systematically by the students as tools to master the course content. A study of math courses showed a 20% higher pass rate in sections using ISR materials.

Students often have a difficult time when they move from one educational institution to another. LaGuardia has removed at least the physical gap between high school and college by putting on its campus the Middle College High School, an alternative educational setting for disaffected youngsters from local public schools, and the International High School, a school specifically for ESL students. In addition, College Now offers moderately achieving high school students the chance to take one or two college-level courses as part of their high school program.

LaGuardia has also embarked on a major articulation initiative with Ford Foundation funding to ease transition from LaGuardia to a four-year college. Choosing the twelve institutions most frequently selected by LaGuardia graduates for transfer, the college has designed "optimal" programs of study showing students how they can satisfy their associate degree requirements and substantially increase the number of credits that will apply toward the baccalaureate.

Eli Plotkin, Director of the New York City Board of Education ESL/Bilingual Unit, described programs in the high schools designed to improve retention, including summer programs for "high-risk" incoming ninth graders and programs that put ninth graders into small groups in order to maintain student interest and involvement in school. The commitment of the principal and the staff have been

found to be crucial factors in successful programs. From the point of view of high schools, the transition from high school to college is seen as risky, especially for students whose proficiency in English is limited. Plotkin stressed that some students may graduate from high school without a high proficiency level in English and that such students need continued support services and perhaps even bilingual instruction in college. A crucial factor in determining student success is the extent to which articulation between high schools and colleges occurs and lines of communication remain open.

Barbara Gonzales, former Dean, CUNY Office of Academic Affairs, described the OAA's Pre-Freshman Summer Program, modeled on previous SEEK and College Discovery programs (see Kehl, this publication). The students in the Summer program experience a high degree of progress, defined as either passing basic skills tests and moving out of remediation or moving up a level in the college's remediation program. This is likely to improve the motivation of students in their first semester at college. Also, the early exposure to the college environment is undoubtedly helpful to incoming students. The Office of Academic Affairs has also funded exemplary and pilot programs, programs that either copy a successful existing program or create new programs. These sorts of programs recognize that students may continue to need support well beyond their first semester of college work.

Dean Eleanor Pontes, CUNY Office of Student Affairs and Special Programs, stressed the importance of taking a good look at the "new population" of students and of structuring programs that meet their needs. She pointed to the increased presence on our campuses of middle-aged men, middle-aged mothers, young people with children, working people, people with special language needs, and others with special academic skills needs. These students may need services at night, early in the morning or on weekends. At conferences on the freshman year, more and more sessions are devoted to innovative approaches to improving the undergraduate experience including academic and personal counseling, peer tutoring, "the college-as-community," multicultural education, core curricula, freshman seminars, pre-freshman programs, and early alert warning systems. Pontes suggested that administrators be invited to observe or even teach a basic skills class in order to increase their awareness and sensitivity to the needs of the "new population" of students.

Most important, Pontes argues, colleges should take a look at who the students <u>are</u> -- not who they <u>wish</u> the students were, and re-shape policy and programs to meet individual needs. Administrators and faculty must value and respect all students, believe in their academic potential, and work at providing courses and services that are needed to attract, to retain, to educate, and finally to graduate those students.

The five educators on the panel emphasized the need for creating a community for all students and, in particular, for "high-risk" students, where they feel that somebody cares about them as individuals, cares that they stay in college, and cares that they receive a good education.

THE CUNY ESL COUNCIL

The CUNY ESL Council was organized in 1974 by coordinators of ESL programs at The City University of New York to promote communication among the various units of the University and represent the interest of ESL faculty and students to College and University administration. It serves as a forum for ESL faculty to discuss programs and policies of member units. The Council holds an annual conference, usually in February, on issues, theory, research, and practice related to ESL instruction. Membership is open to full-time and part-time CUNY faculty interested in the teaching of English as a second language.

THE INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

The Instructional Resource Center of The City University of New York (CUNY) was created by the Board of Higher Education in November 1974 to facilitate, organize, expand, and coordinate the basic skills resources of the seventeen undergraduate colleges of the University.

The Center seeks to identify effective program designs, significant curricular materials, and outstanding teachers; encourage collaborative efforts among the colleges; and share CUNY's basic skills experiences with educators outside the University. Since 1977, the Center has also served as an information channel for the CUNY Freshman Skills Assessment Program (FSAP), which tests incoming students and sets criteria for minimum competency in reading, writing, mathematics, and English as a second language.

As part of its dissemination program, the Center publishes a newsletter, *Resource*; reports and monographs; and annual publications on undergraduate mathematics, basic writing and writing assessment, as well as selected papers from the CUNY ESL Council conferences.

The Center is a division of CUNY's Office of Academic Affairs and is under the direction of University Associate Dean Harvey S. Wiener. Its projects are coordinated by Virginia B. Slaughter.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

about the CUNY ESL Council, or for a list/order form of Instructional Resource Center publications, please write to The Instructional Resource Center, Office of Academic Affairs, The City University of New York, 535 East 80th Street, New York, NY 10021.

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